

Orthodox Union West Coast Region Conference
“State of the Jewish Global Village Post-September 11th”

Topic of the dinner “KOL YISRAEL AREYVIM:

A Pro-active Approach to Fulfilling Our Responsibilities to Our Fellow Jews”

Monday, December 23, 2002

- I want to thank you all for inviting me to be part of the OU’s West Coast Convention.
- For decades, the OU has been helping to build strong and vibrant communities across the West Coast Region and especially here in Los Angeles. Under the direction of Rabbi Kalinsky, and the officers of the board, your work with synagogues, families and youth has had a remarkable impact. I am especially proud that your new headquarters in Los Angeles is my district and I have heard wonderful reviews of the activities and programming.
- I would like to acknowledge Rabbi Riskin, the Chief Rabbi of Efrat, and a committed advocate, who is well known for his work on behalf of Israel and Jewish communities around the world.
- I would also like to thank Rabbi Abner Weiss and the congregants of Beth Jacob for hosting us this evening.
- As you all know the past year has been very challenging for the world Jewish community. Unrelenting terrorist attacks against innocent Israeli civilians have devastated families and strangled the country’s economy.
- In Europe, the outbreak of anti-Semitic violence against Jews and Jewish institutions is the worst since the world has seen since the end of the Holocaust.

- The situation has been made worse by an unfair rush to judgement against Israel in the United Nations and the European Parliament, which demands no accountability from Arafat.
- In light of these challenges, U.S. solidarity with Israel has become stronger and more important than ever.
- In June, President Bush spelled out strict demands for Palestinian reforms, calling for new elections, the denunciation of terrorism, and an end to corruption. Congress is determined to see the Administration follows through with those demands.
- As much as the United States government wants to invest in a future for Palestinians, to help them break free from poverty and despair, we can have no part in brokering the creation of a Palestinian state infected by terrorism and corruption. A timeline for Palestinian statehood is useless unless security conditions are in place and Arafat is removed from power.
- That is why the Administration must stand firm in its insistence that the Quartet not project a roadmap for peace until after the Israeli elections. There is no way to negotiate a settlement without Israel's involvement, and there is no way to impose a solution that is not in Israel's interest.
- There is a myth that Israel must be forced to make compromises. Well the peace treaty with Egypt and Jordan and the effort at Camp David all prove that Israel is the partner that has always been ready and willing to work for a lasting settlement.
- It is Arafat who has thwarted each political breakthrough with waves of terror attacks funded through his militias and activities like the shipment of Iranian weapons aboard the Karin-A.

- It is Arafat who has undermined progress for the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority. He continues to fund the Al Aqsa Martyr's Brigade, which openly works with Hamas and Islamic Jihad and was added to the U.S. list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations in March. His administration of Palestinian finances is absolutely corrupt. And he has intimidated and silenced any moderate voices calling for political change and an end to the violence.
- The Camp David Summit brought Israelis to the frontier of peaceful coexistence with their Arab neighbors. Arafat is the one responsible for bringing his people to the brink of war. Instead of spending the Oslo years investing money in infrastructure, economic development, and education, he built up his paramilitary forces and promoted anti-Zionist propaganda in schools, mosques, and the media.
- Israel has long warned that terrorism as a political strategy is a threat to all civilized nations of the world. In the aftermath of September 11th, no country understands this more than the United States.
- The partnership between Israel and American has always based on shared values of democracy and freedom, but now our alliance is underscored by the fact that we also face the same threats of Islamic extremism, Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, Iran's pursuit of nuclear missiles.

- We have evidence that Hamas gets its financing through the same channels as Al Qaeda. The Israelis in Mombasa suffered at the hands of the same Al Qaeda network responsible for the attack on Americans at the U.S. embassy in Nairobi. The uneasiness of all Americans after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington is constantly felt on the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.
- That is why solidarity with Israel is felt so strongly by Americans with no connection to the Jewish community and Jews with no strong affiliation to Judaism. Turning our back on Israel would be like turning our back on our own war against terrorism.
- The theme here tonight is “*kol yisrael arayvim zeh ba’zeh*” - all of Israel is responsible for one another, all of communities depend upon each other. It is the mantra of our community to let no Jew be isolated, and it is especially important in this difficult time for Israel.
- When Moses went before Pharaoh and said “Let My People Go,” he made sure that the exodus left no one behind. That is our legacy.
- From the campaign to free Soviet Jewry and bring Jews out of Ethiopia, to the dedicated work of the OU on behalf of Israeli soldiers missing in action and Iranian Jews sentenced by kangaroo courts. We refuse to be complacent.
- In the 108th Congress I intend to make sure that the Congressional Task Force Against Anti-Semitism is more active than ever before because we face tremendous challenges.

- Across the Arab world, in countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, media coverage is laced with a constant stream of anti-Zionism, anti-Semitism, and Holocaust denial. Much of that programming is being imported via satellite into Europe.
- European universities are trying to undermine the work of Israeli scholars and scientists. Campaigns to divest from Israel are being promoted on campuses here in the United States.
- Never before has the strength of the American Jewish community been more important and never before has the American Jewish Community been so strong. It is through groups like the OU, that the community's activism resounds.
- Our work is cut out for us and we are up to the challenge.